

# Falls North

## Small Area Plan

Draft Report - September 2017









# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Process and Participation.....	7
Primary Input Themes .....	9
Existing Conditions .....	11
Plan Recommendations .....	24
Implementation Actions .....	39
Appendix.....	43



# Acknowledgments

## City Council

Nancy McFarlane, Mayor

Kay Crowder, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Member, District D

Mary-Ann Baldwin, Council Member At Large

Corey F. Branch, Council Member, District C

David N. Cox, Council Member, District B

Bonner Gaylord, Council Member, District E

Russ Stephenson, Council Member At Large

Richard A. “Dickie” Thompson, Council Member, District A

## Project Confirmation Group

Angela Allen

Samuel Boyce

Susan Burton

Leon Cooke

Andi Curtis

Bob J. Fry

Linda Monaghan

James P. Morrison

Olalah Njenga

Kerry O’Sullivan

Will Owens

John T. Purves

Randy Ray

John M. Toller

Mary Lou Young

## City Manager

Ruffin Hall

## Department of City Planning

Ken Bowers, AICP, Director

## City of Raleigh Project Team

Jason Hardin, AICP

Kyle Little

Bynum Walter, AICP

## Office of Transportation Planning

Eric Lamb, PE

Jason Myers, AICP

## Communications

Sharon Felton

David Langley

Aaron Sheppard

## Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

T.J. McCourt

## Consultant Team

Rhodeside & Harwell

Partners for Economic Solutions

Timmons Group





# Introduction

The Falls North Area Plan provides policy guidance for land use, transportation, and urban design decisions for some of Raleigh's northernmost neighborhoods. It also sets out a list of actions aimed at improving transportation and park facilities and creating a stronger identity for the area.

The plan study area extends along the Falls of Neuse Road corridor north from Durant Road to the Neuse River (see Figure 1 below). The bounds of the study area were drawn to include civic and institutional uses, undeveloped lots that have frontage on major streets with the potential to be developed, and natural areas along the Neuse River. Along the corridor, extensive vegetation and natural amenities give the area a distinctive sense of place.

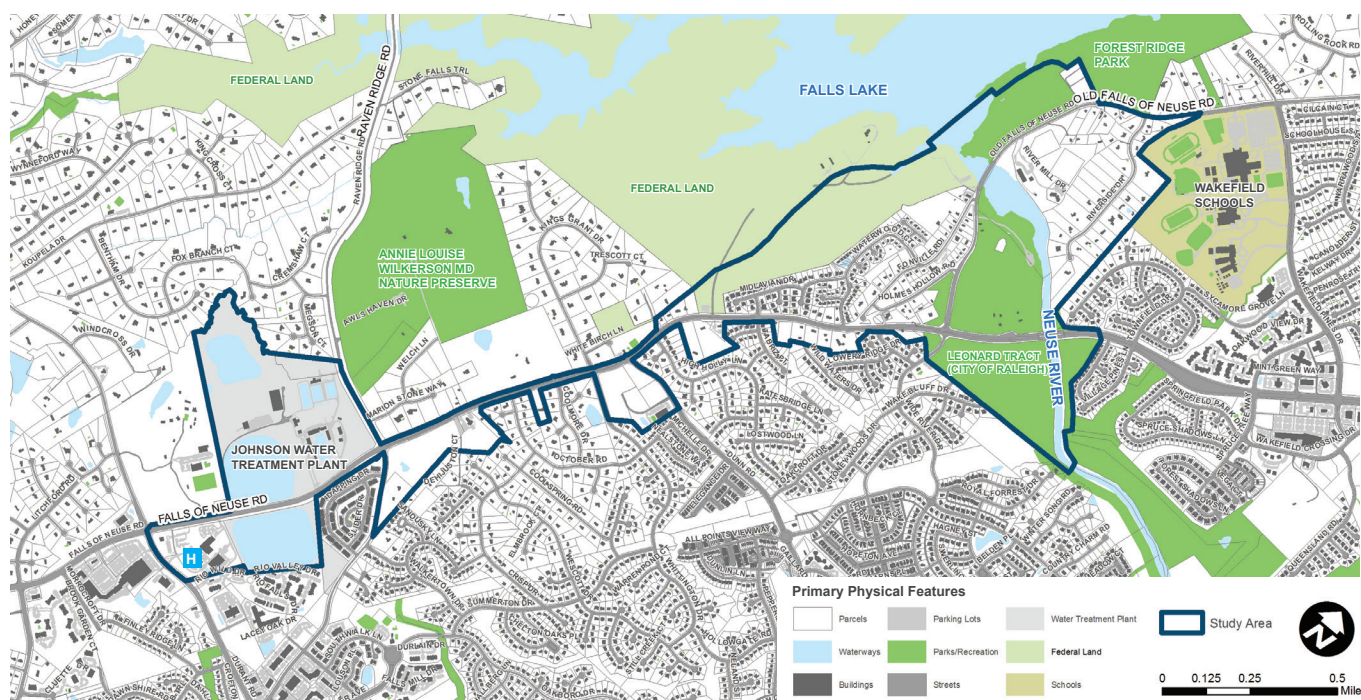
In terms of land use, the Falls North area consists largely, though not solely, of a mix of residential areas and significant natural resources, such as the Neuse River and Falls Lake, that provide substantial opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The area's development has taken place primarily during the last few decades, although a small mill village along the river, called the Falls Community, dates to the early 1900s. As Raleigh and its northern suburbs continued to grow, the corridor has evolved, with commercial uses more prevalent south of Durant Road.

In 2006, the City adopted the Falls of Neuse Corridor Plan. That document provided policy guidance for zoning, future land use, and watershed protection along the corridor.

A number of changes have occurred since then that justify an update to the plan. These include the widening and realignment of Falls of Neuse Road and the addition of major new recreational facilities, including the Neuse River Greenway and future city parkland along the river. Additionally, in the years immediately prior to the 2017 plan update process, rezoning requests to permit additional retail space generated considerable discussion in the community, meriting reexamination of the land use designations in the area.

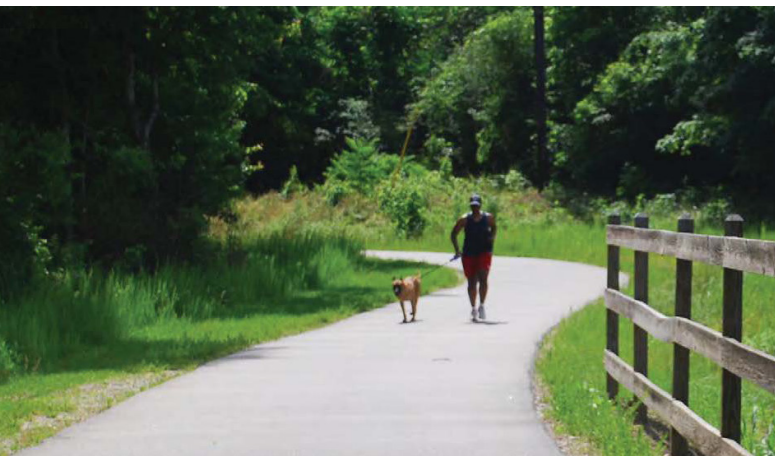
**Figure 1: Falls of Neuse Study Area**







Falls of Neuse Road serves as a defining feature of the area and carries significant numbers of vehicles daily.



Numerous natural and recreational features, such as the Neuse River Greenway, also define the area.

## Plan Purpose and Area Character

The purpose of the plan update is to provide guidance for future zoning, development, and capital projects that will enhance the character of the corridor and enhance its identity as a center of outdoor recreation and natural beauty.

The plan process identified three highly generalized character areas along the corridor (see Figure 2 below). The southern section of the plan area, from Durant Road to Raven Ridge Road, is generally characterized by civic and institutional uses. In this zone is the WakeMed hospital and the city's water treatment plant.

Farther north, the area between Raven Ridge Road and Old Falls of Neuse Road is largely characterized by residential uses. Some frontage lots in this portion of the study area have the potential to be redeveloped into mixed use development that would be sensitive to the context of the surrounding residential character.

The final character area, the land adjacent to Falls Lake and the Neuse River, is a largely natural area that will continue to be protected and utilized for recreational opportunities. It also includes the Falls Community, the historic mill village along the river.

The character areas are not formal designations. However, they did inform the analysis and recommendations that follow in this document.



Figure 2. General character areas for the study area.



# Process and Participation

## Plan Process

Given the high level of community interest in future land uses along the corridor, the plan process was designed to provide numerous points and forms of public input. The process took place over the spring and summer of 2017, with events designed and promoted to reach a broad cross-section of stakeholders. A City Council-appointed Confirmation Group was tasked with ensuring an open and welcoming process and that final recommendations aligned with received input.

The process included multiple events, including two hands-on workshops and an online survey. More than 100 respondents provided input through the survey, substantially adding to the data gathered during previous events. Summaries of input from these events can be found in the appendix.

## Public Events

**Kickoff Workshop.** This event, held on May 24, was the introductory workshop for the plan update. Information about the project scope, process, and existing conditions were presented to the public. Attendees were asked to break into groups to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within the study area.



The plan process included a tour of the corridor with the Confirmation Group and interested members of the public.



A project kickoff workshop gave participants the chance to identify issues and opportunities within the study area.

**Community Workshop.** The second meeting, held on June 21, also took the form of a workshop, this time with a more specific focus. The consultant team for the project presented potential development scenarios for key locations along the corridor. Community members in attendance were again asked to break into groups and to discuss and provide feedback on the alternatives presented by the consultants.

**Presentation of Draft Recommendations.** At the final public meeting, held on August 10, draft recommendations were presented to attendees. This public meeting sought public input and a general level of acceptance before the creation of the draft project report.

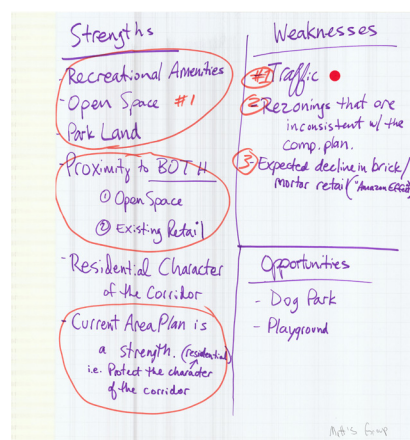
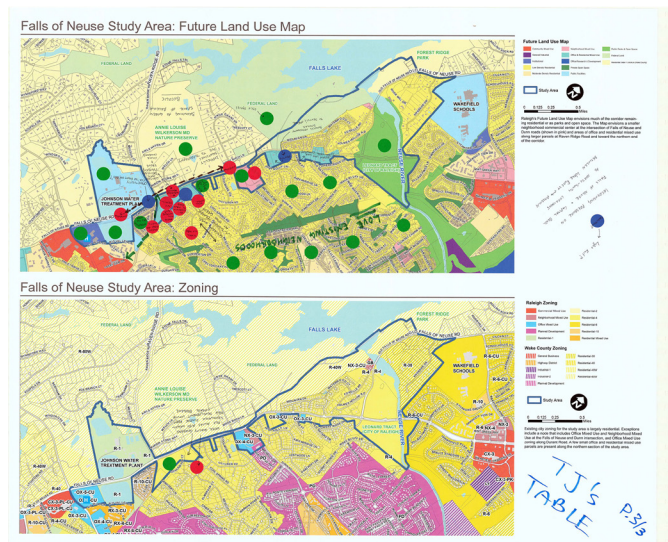
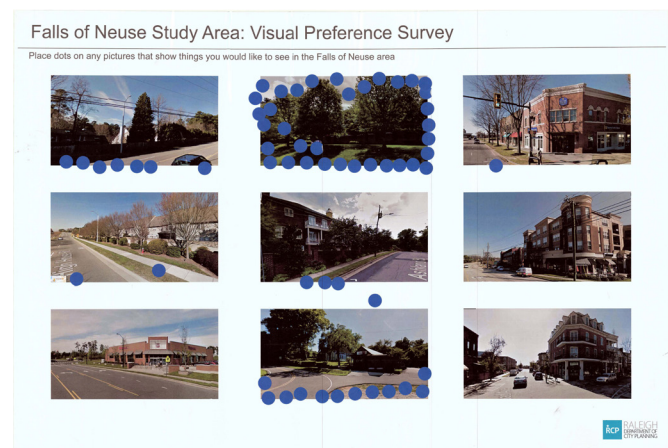
## Confirmation Group

This group, a body of 15 residents, property owners, and representatives of institutions along the corridor was selected by City Council. The group provided oversight of the planning process to ensure that it reflects the input of community stakeholders. The group's orientation meeting took place on May 1. The first formal meeting, as well as a tour of the area with the group and project consultants, took place on May 18, with subsequent meetings on June 21, June 29 and August 7.

## Project Consultants

Rhodeside & Harwell, an Alexandria, Virginia-based planning and design firm, was contracted by the city to lead the public input process and develop recommendations for the plan. The consultants attended the tour of the area on May 18 and a subsequent meeting for public input on June 29. The consultant developed site-specific recommendations for the corridor based on public input to help guide future development in the study area.

Rhodeside & Harwell was assisted by two additional consultants. Partners for Economic Solutions provided market analysis, and the Timmons Group analyzed transportation conditions in the study area.



Input from the project workshops included visual preference surveys (top), the location of specific issues and opportunities (middle), and generalized strengths and weaknesses of the area (bottom).



# Primary Input Themes

A small number of major themes quickly emerged during the planning process. The first was that strong support remained for the overall goals and direction of the existing 2006 corridor plan. This support indicated that the plan update would function best as a refinement of the earlier plan, one that kept the foundation intact while addressing newer issues.

The plan process essentially ratified the primary theme of the earlier plan — the desire to generally maintain the area's character, defined by the heavy vegetation along Falls of Neuse Road, the historic Falls Community, and the natural and recreational features. Enhancing those features proved to be a broadly supported goal of the plan update.

Beyond the general theme of enhancing character and carrying forward the spirit of the prior plan, primary goals included enhancing natural resources; carefully considering the scale, appearance, and uses involved in future development; and accommodating active recreation.

## 2006 Falls of Neuse Corridor Plan: Major Takeaways



**Falls of Neuse Corridor Character**

Protect the character of the corridor. Maintain the sense of place created by the extensive roadside vegetation, Falls Lake, and the Falls Community.



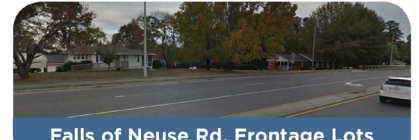
**Fonville Community Conservation**

The character and the design of new development or redevelopment in the historically-significant Falls community should reflect its material and character.



**Falls of Neuse Area Conservation**

Protect environmentally significant areas including the Falls Lake watershed, the Neuse River, slopes greater than 15%, and the 100-year floodplain along the Neuse River.

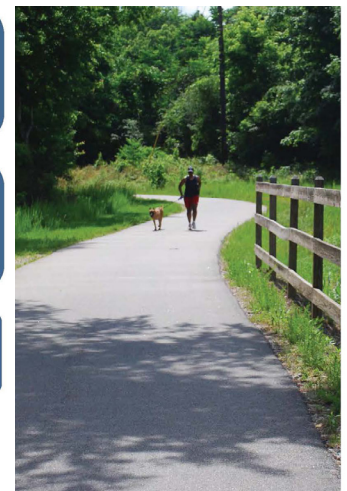


**Falls of Neuse Rd. Frontage Lots**

Small frontage lots on Falls of Neuse Road should be recombined for development rather than redeveloped individually.

## Primary Interests and Concerns

- Honor and celebrate environmental resources by supporting and enhancing natural amenities
- Protect neighborhoods by considering the scale, appearance, and context of future development
- Accommodate active recreation and encourage walking and biking









# Current Conditions

## Overview

The Falls North area occupies the much of the northernmost portion of the city, where a finger of Raleigh extends several miles north toward Wake Forest. The Falls of Neuse corridor largely serves as the dividing line between Raleigh and unincorporated Wake County to the west.

The study area for this planning project stretches along Falls of Neuse Road and Old Falls of Neuse Road (see Figure 3 on the following pages). It extends 2.8 miles from Durant Road in the south to the Neuse River and Falls Lake in the north. The area includes city-owned properties at both ends (the Johnson Water Treatment Plant and properties adjacent to the river), the WakeMed North hospital, and the Falls Lake Dam, and is adjacent to the Wakefield schools.

The area also includes the historic Falls Community adjacent to the river, as well as some undeveloped tracts, particularly along the east side of the corridor. Finally, Falls Lake itself and federally-owned surrounding lands make up a large portion of the area.

While the study area largely is contained within city limits, a portion of the northern area includes some areas within Wake County jurisdiction. This reflects the importance of a broader context and unified approach for the recreational areas near the Falls Lake Dam.

## Land Use and Zoning

Current land uses within the study area primarily consist of residential uses and parks and open space (see Figure 3 on following pages). Commercial areas bookend the area on the north and south, at the intersections of Falls



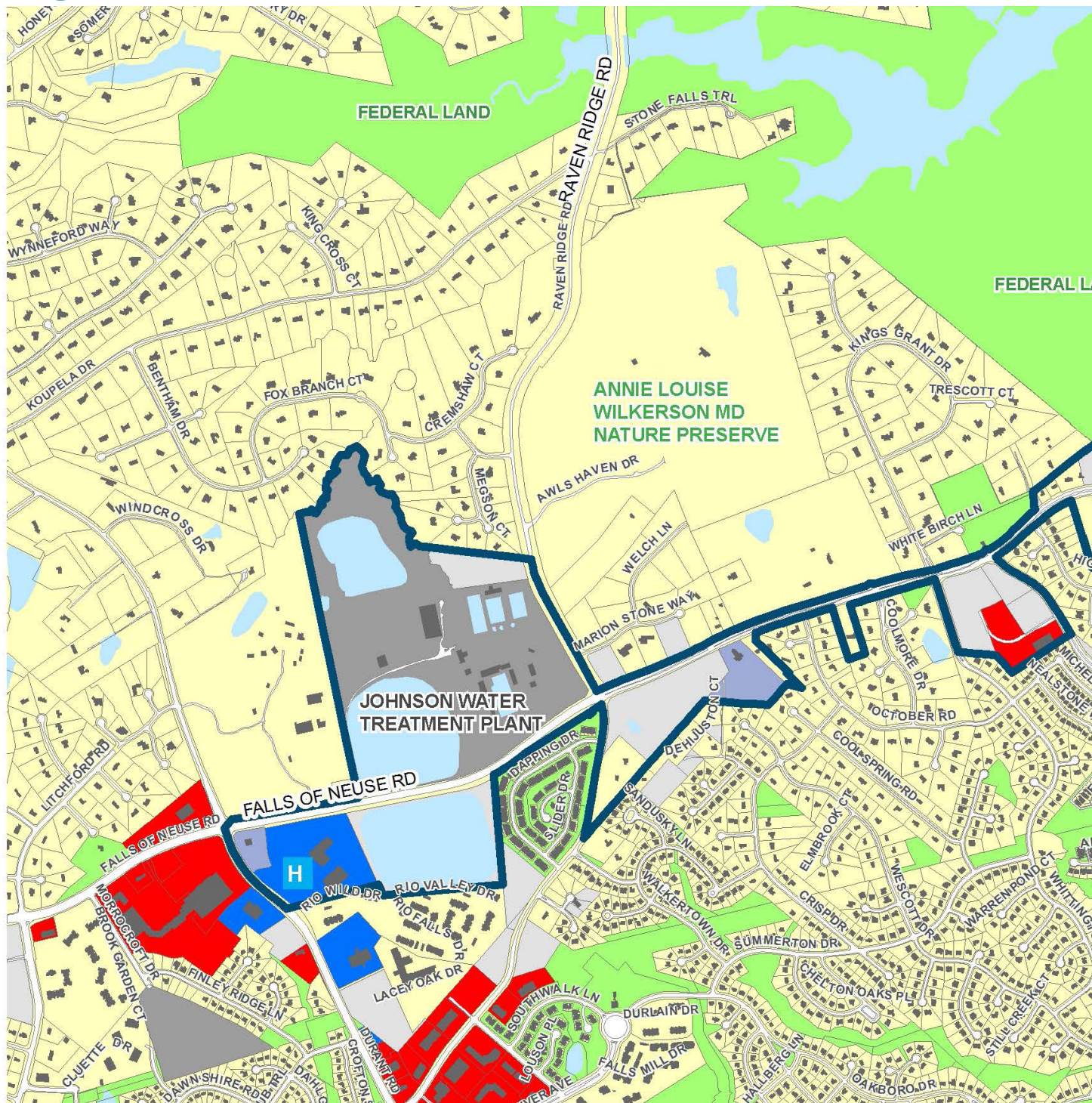
The Neuse River (pictured from Falls of Neuse Road) is a major feature of the plan area.



Much of Falls of Neuse Road within the study area is characterized by residential uses and a tree-lined edge.

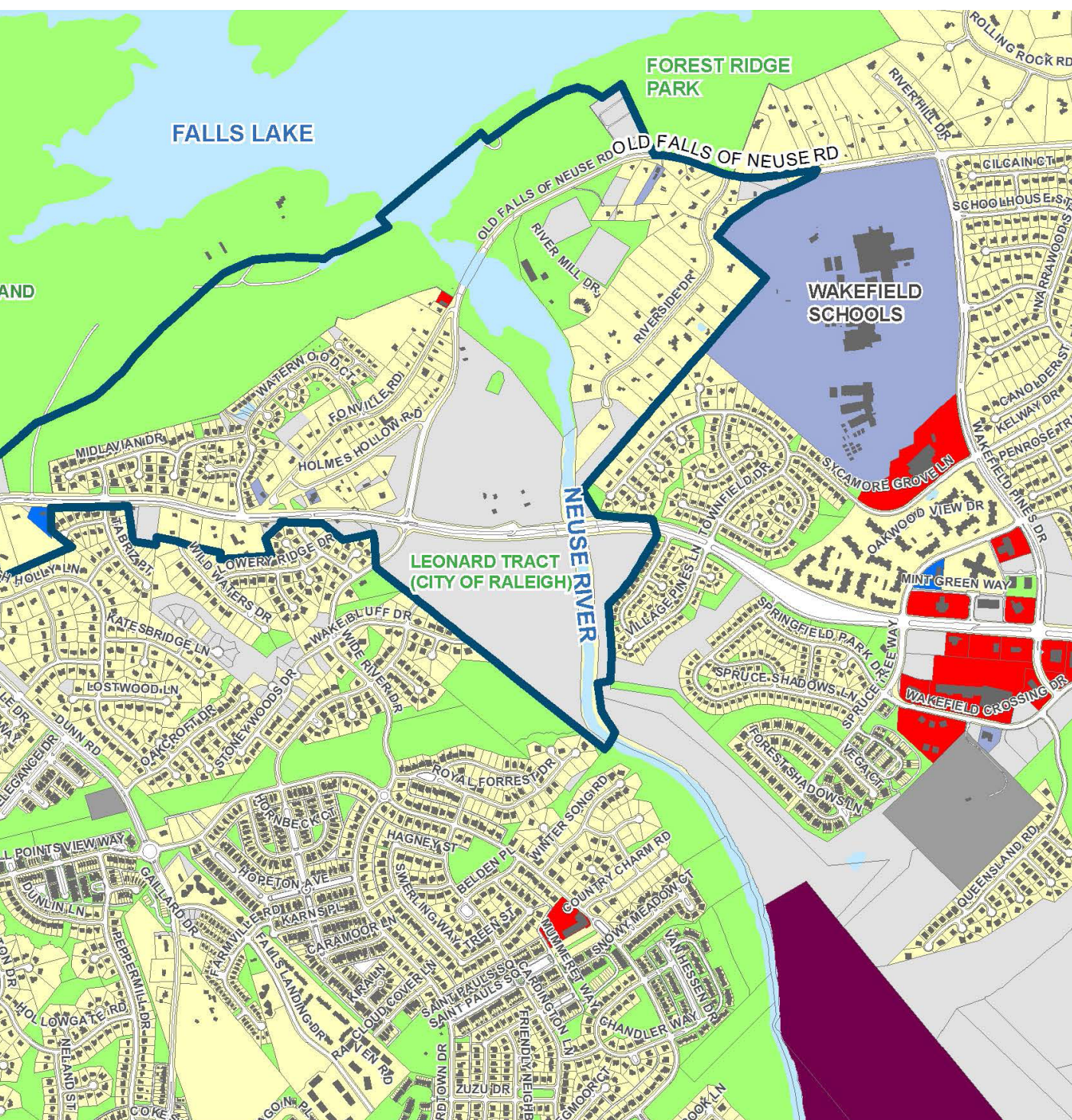


## Figure 3. Falls North: Current Land Use



Current land uses within the study area primarily consist of residential uses and parks and open space. Commercial areas bookend the area on the north and south, at the intersections of Falls of Neuse Road with Durant Road and Wakefield Pines Drive.





### Primary Physical Features

	Civic		Medical
	Commercial		Parks, Open Space, and Greenways
	Residential		Resource Extraction
	Utilities		Vacant

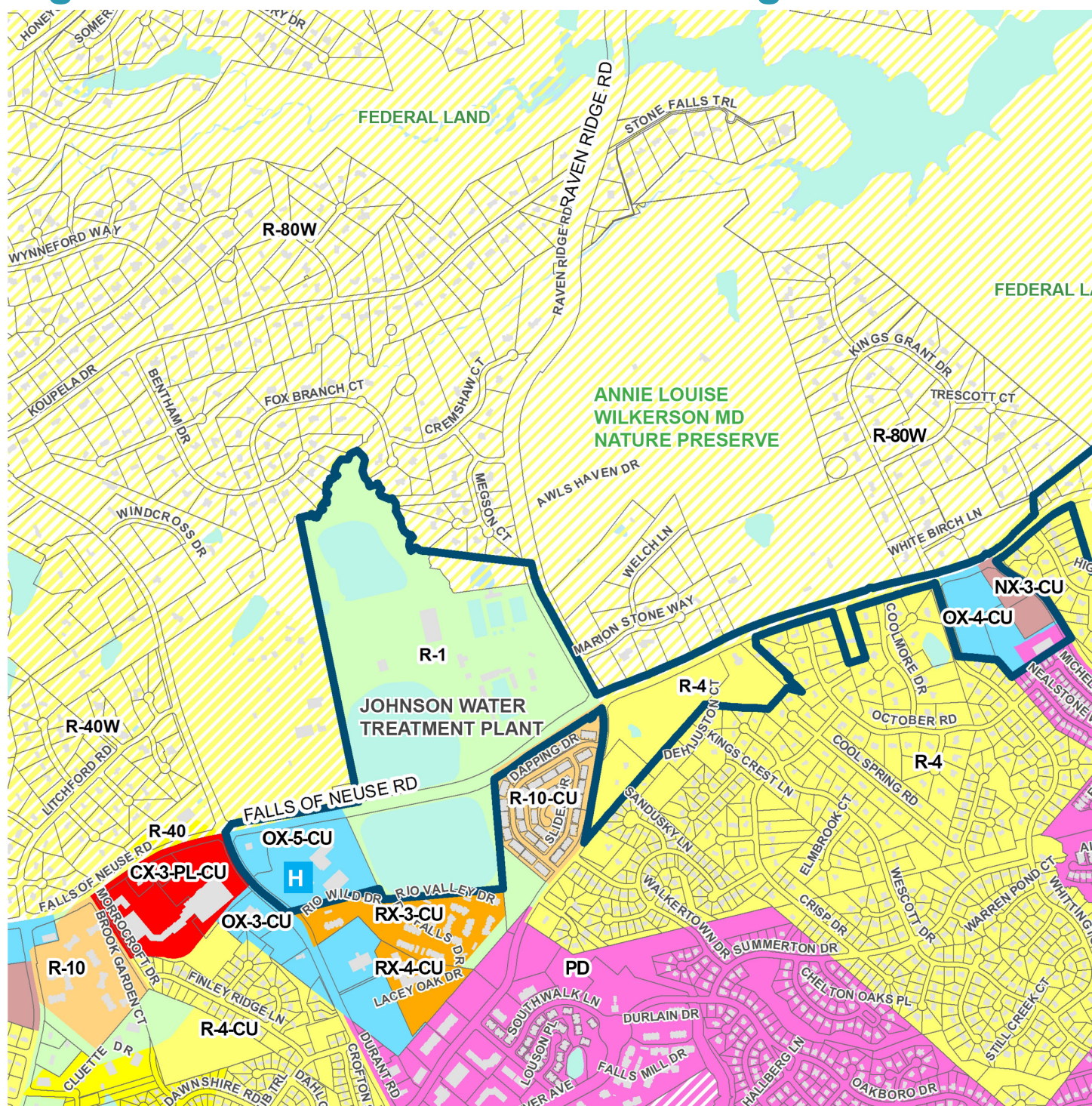
 Study Area



0 0.125 0.25 0.5  
Miles



## Figure 4. Falls North: Current Zoning

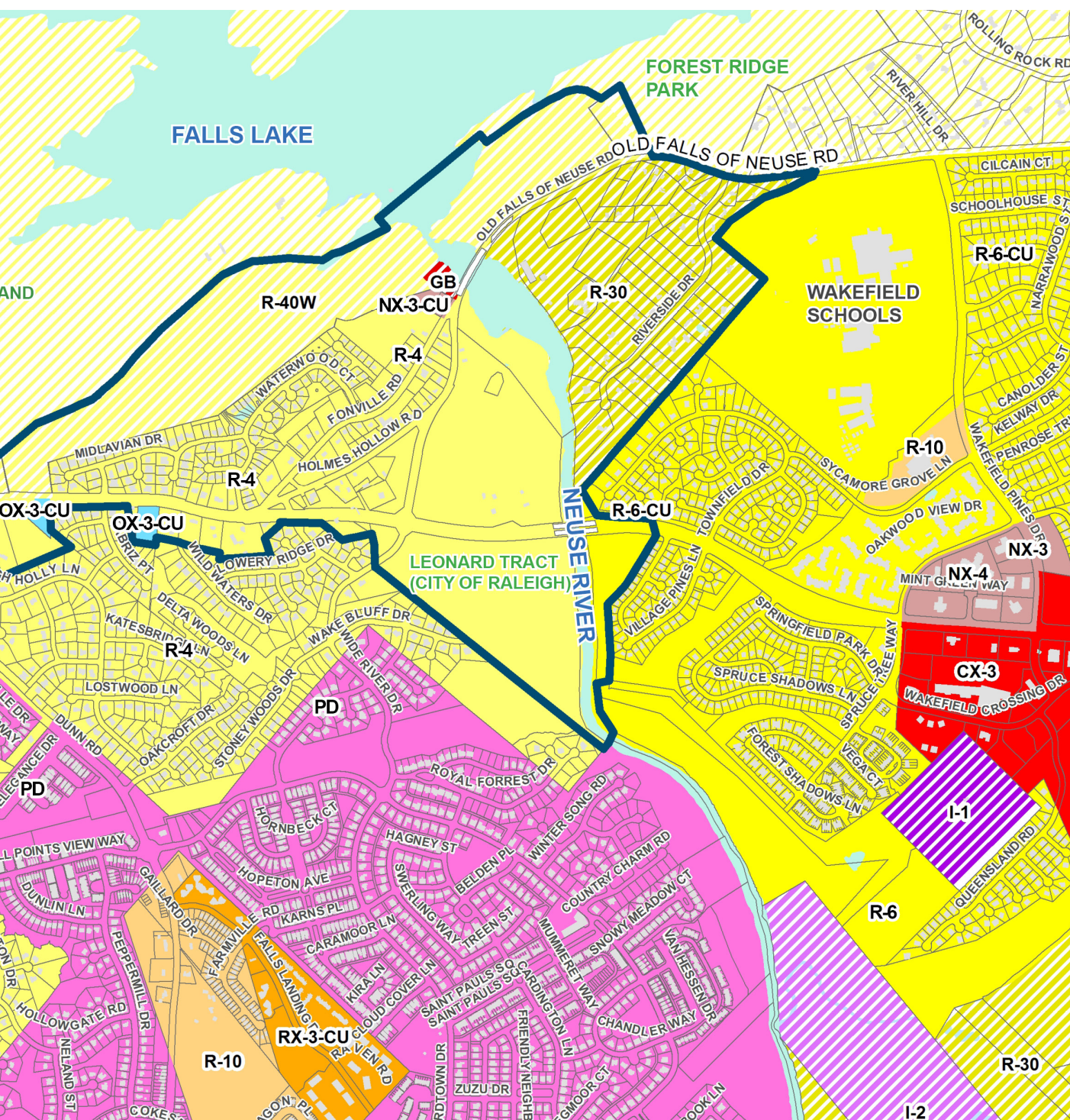


Existing city zoning for the study area is largely residential. Exceptions include a node that includes Office Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use at the Falls of Neuse and Dunn intersection, and Office Mixed Use zoning along Durant Road. A few small office and residential mixed use parcels are present along the northern section of the study area.

## Raleigh Zoning

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
|  | Commercial Mix  |
|  | Neighborhood M  |
|  | Office Mixed Us |
|  | Planned Develop |
|  | Residential-1   |





### Wake County Zoning

Residential-2	General Business	Residential-30
Residential-4	Highway District	Residential-40
Residential-6	Industrial-1	Residential-40W
Residential-10	Industrial-2	Residential-80W
Residential Mixed Use	Planned Development	

 Study Area



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles



of Neuse Road with Durant Road and Wakefield Pines Drive.

Existing city zoning for the study area is largely residential. (See Figure 4 on pages 14-15) Exceptions include a node that includes Office and Residential Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use at the Falls of Neuse and Dunn intersection, and an area zoned for Office and Residential Mixed Use along Durant Road.

The northern portion of the study area is characterized more by residential zoning than the southern portion. Beyond the node of mixed-use zoning at Dunn Road, only two parcels are zoned for office use. At the northwestern corner of the study area, a small commercial node (partly in the city's jurisdiction, partly within Wake County's jurisdiction) exists where Old Falls of Neuse Road crosses the Neuse River.

The southern end of the study area includes a wider range of zoning designations. Commercial Mixed Use zoning is found just south of the plan area boundary, and Office Mixed Use and Residential Mixed Use zoning is found north of Durant Road. Farther north, residential zoning again characterizes the corridor until the intersection at Dunn Road.

The area also includes a watershed protection overlay zoning district. Illustrating the importance placed on water quality, both Raleigh and Wake County have created watershed protection overlay districts in recent years. The districts govern impervious surfaces and seek to limit runoff into the lake and Neuse River.

### Other Features

The Falls North area has developed largely in the last few decades (See Figures 7 and 8 on page 19). Unlike portions of the city built in the decades after World War II, the study area and adjacent neighborhoods have a relatively extensive sidewalk network. Falls of Neuse Road itself has sidewalks throughout the project area. Some residential subdivisions along the



WakeMed North and other institutional uses, such as the city's water treatment plant, define the southern portion of the area.



Residential uses, such as the Raven Pointe townhouses, are more prevalent along the northern end of the study area.

study area, however, either have no sidewalks or have sidewalks on one side only.

The study area includes a number of historic resources, particularly in the Falls Community, which predates other development in the area by several decades. Numerous houses and other structures have been included in the "Study List" by the State Historic Preservation Office, a category that includes structures potentially eligible for the National Register. The area does include one National Register structure, the River Mill, which sits on the north bank of the Neuse River.







Figure 5. Falls North: Zoning Overlays

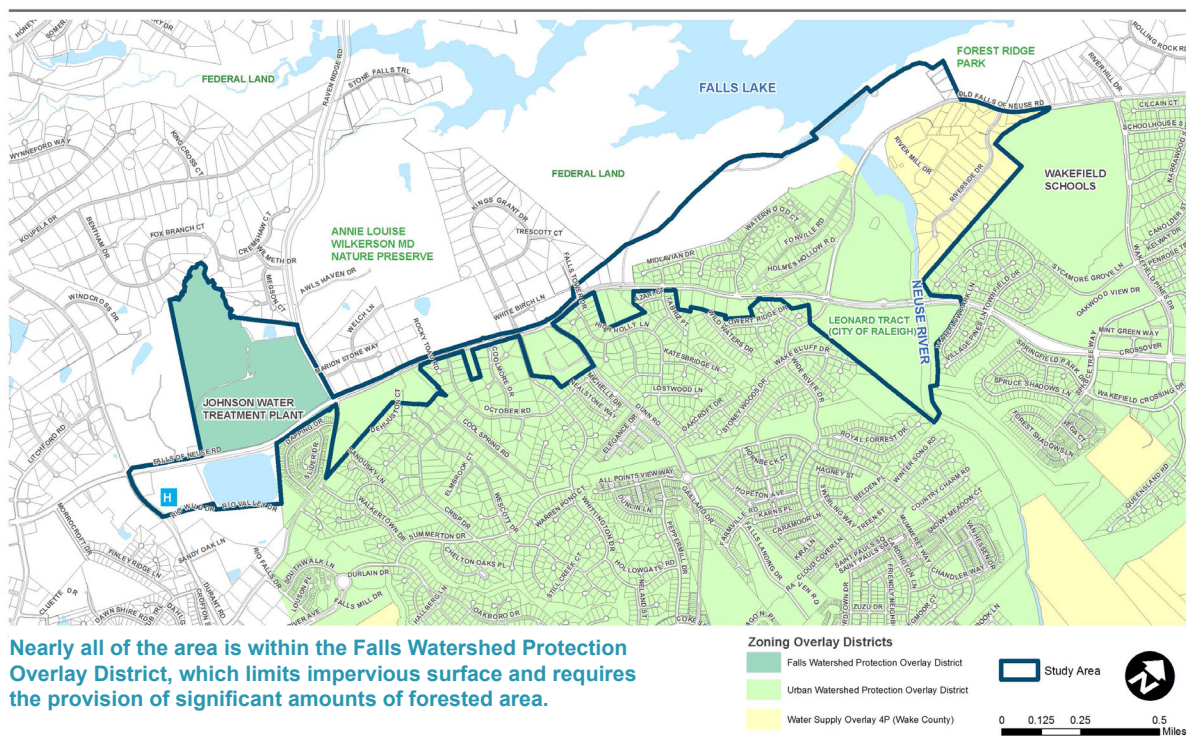


Figure 6. Falls North: Jurisdictions

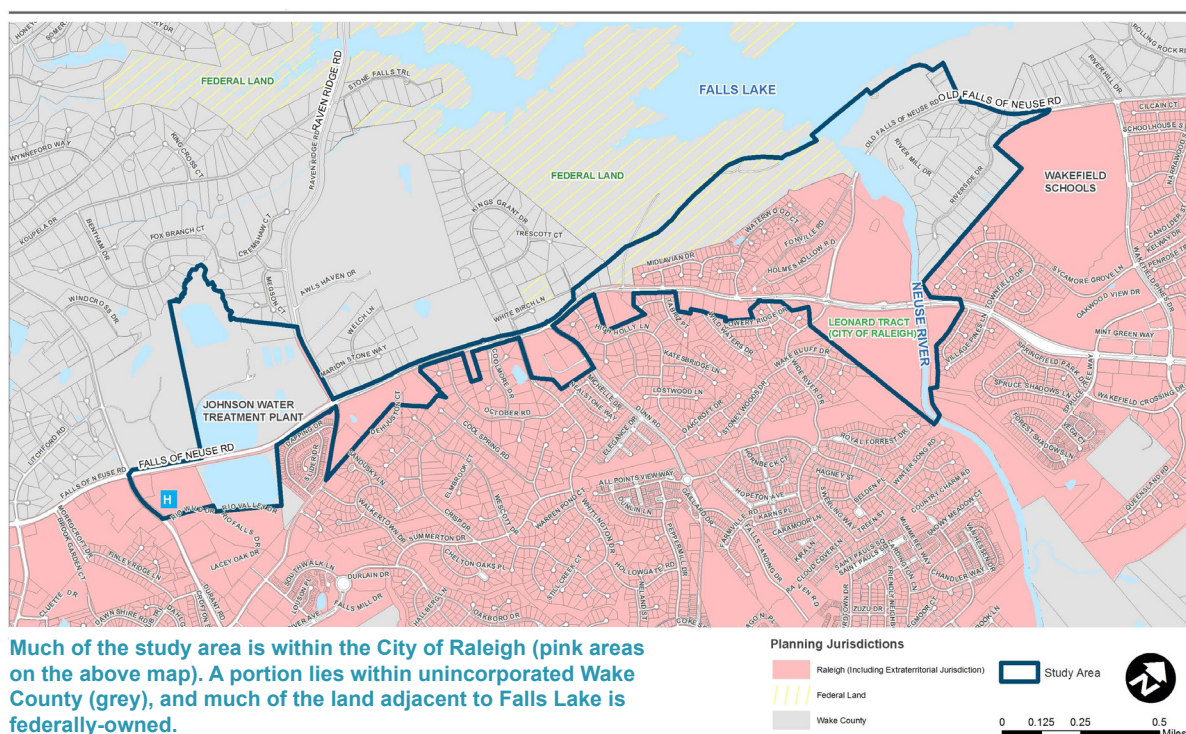
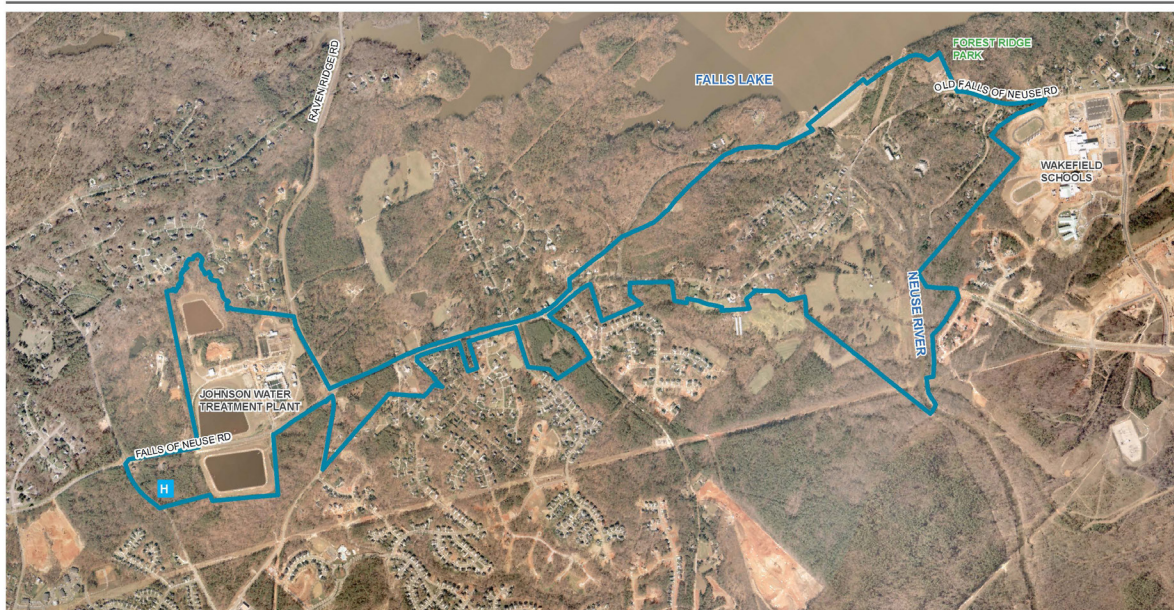
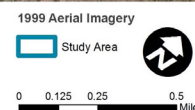




Figure 7. Falls North: 1999 Aerial Photo

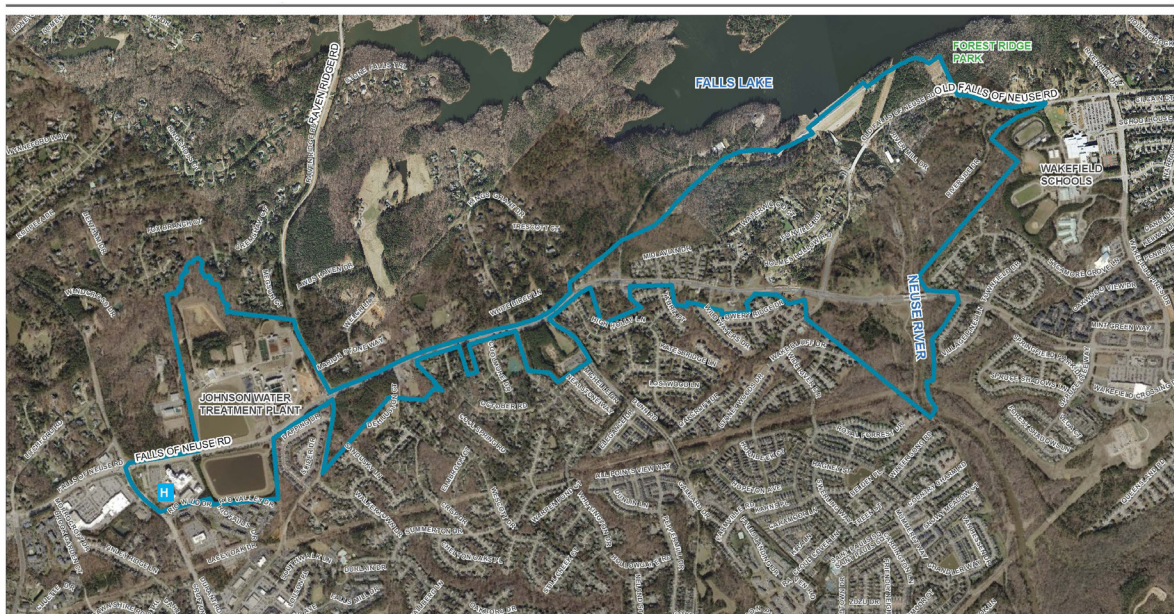


Much of the Falls North area has been developed in the last few decades, as the aerial photos from 1999 (above) and 2016 (below) illustrate. In 1999, much of the land east of Falls of Neuse Road was undeveloped or consisted of subdivisions with numerous undeveloped lots.

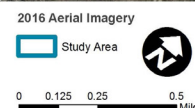


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Figure 8. Falls North: 2016 Aerial Photo



By 2016, the portion of Raleigh within the study area had largely been developed. The plan process focused heavily on the few remaining undeveloped properties along the corridor, along with parcels where demand for redevelopment might exist.





## Market Study

The planning process included a market study focused on residential, office, and retail demand. The intent was to identify the points where community preferences intersected with viable market uses.

The market area used in the analysis extended beyond the relatively narrow study area boundaries. The area included most of the land between Falls Lake and Capital Boulevard, taking in the residential neighborhoods east of Falls of Neuse Road.

In 2016, that area included a population of 14,474 residents living in 5,514 households. Since 2010, the area population has grown 12.3 percent, adding almost 1,600 new residents.

The market study included an analysis of both residential and commercial potential. Commercial analysis focused on both retail and office uses.

The analysis also noted broader shifts occurring in the retail industry, specifically the rise in online commerce and the potential of automated deliveries. As deliveries become more convenient, less costly and faster, shoppers will be less likely to visit a bricks-and-mortar store and retailing will change significantly. Stores are likely to shrink in size and number.

Though these shifts in transportation and the retail environment will likely take 10 years to develop, the changes have begun. Over the next couple of decades, the need for physical retail space is expected to decline.

## Residential

In terms of residential uses, the study found potential demand for a variety of housing types, but noted that the value and sizes of available parcels and their location on a major arterial suggest that the most likely housing uses would be townhouses or low-rise apartments.

## Retail

Setting aside zoning and policy guidance and analyzing only market potential, the size and nature of available sites in the study area suggested that the most likely retail uses would be a grocery store, a grocery-anchored neighborhood shopping center or a standalone convenience retail use such as a drugstore.

Falls of Neuse Road sites are appealing to retailers due to the high incomes of surrounding neighborhoods and the amount of daily trips along the corridor (36,000 vehicles per day in 2015).

Most of the major grocery chains active in the Triangle market have a store within seven miles of the study area, including several within one mile. This coverage pattern does not reveal any gaps in market coverage that would prevent area residents from accessing one or more grocery stores.

A new grocery store, particularly one not well represented in the immediate vicinity, could potentially find sufficient market support. However, that market support would come primarily from other existing grocery stores with little net new economic activity.

Excluding a grocery store, retail opportunities for the study area would include primarily restaurants and convenience retail and services. Potentials for a retail center with small shops and restaurants are relatively limited without a grocery store or other generator of customer traffic. Though mixed-use development could provide some support from on-site residents or office tenants, the retailers would depend primarily on customers arriving by car. A small center of 15,000 to 20,000 square feet might be supportable on the Raven Ridge site, but leasing could be a challenge.

Master planning and implementation of recreational improvements at Falls of Neuse and Neuse River Trail could further boost visitation to the dam and the Leonard Tract (see Figure 3 on pages 12-13) and encourage additional use of the greenway. This focused demand from cyclists, hikers and others







enjoying the natural area could support a small retail cluster near the dam.

### Office

The nature of the undeveloped sites in the study area, including a location removed from major employment centers, limits their potential for major office development. Most likely would be the development of small offices for professionals serving the local population – dentists, doctors, attorneys, accountants, insurance and real estate agents, and other small offices.

Study area sites could support 20,000 to 40,000 square feet of office space, of which one-third might favor stand-alone buildings of 2,000 to 5,000 square feet while two-thirds would prefer a multi-tenant building near WakeMed.

### Summary

The study area's commercial development opportunities are somewhat limited, including:

- One to three cafes or restaurants
- Specialty retail and service uses such as pet care, dry cleaners or small fitness uses
- A drugstore or convenience store
- Medical office space in a multi-tenant building of 13,000 to 24,000 square feet close to WakeMed
- 7,000 to 12,000 square feet of small, freestanding offices for dentists and other professionals serving the local population
- A café or ice cream/sandwich shop near the Falls of Neuse dam.

The market study concluded that while a grocery store might be successful by attracting sales from other existing stores, it would not be needed to fill any discernible need or gap in the market.

The study indicated that the market would best support residential development, including rental apartments with surface or above-ground parking and/or for-sale townhouses.

### Transportation Analysis

This study focused primarily on land use questions along the corridor. However, transportation issues were analyzed as well. Many plan participants cited traffic as a significant concern. Currently, the section of Falls of Neuse Road from Durant Road south to Interstate 540 is scheduled to be widened to six lanes. Long-range plans call for the section within the study area to be widened as well, but the project is currently unfunded.

As part of the Falls of Neuse corridor analysis, a high level transportation analysis was performed. This included analysis of each signalized intersection along the corridor (Durant Road, Raven Ridge Road, Dunn Road, and Old Falls of Neuse Road / Wide River Drive).

Falls of Neuse Road currently has a four-lane median divided cross section with turn lanes present at each major intersection. The roadway has a multi-use path along the east side of the corridor and sidewalk along the west side of the corridor (from Raven Ridge Road through Old Falls of Neuse Road). The 2015 average annual daily traffic volume along Falls of Neuse Road immediately north of Durant Road is 36,000 vehicles per day.

Observations and analysis pertaining to vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian service is provided below.

### Vehicular

- Significant southbound a.m. peak hour traffic and queuing exists along Falls of Neuse Road
- Southbound queues were noted that spill back from Interstate 540 westbound ramps to north of the existing water treatment plant, although south of Raven Ridge Road
- Westbound left-turn queues exist along Durant Road for vehicles wishing to turn south onto Falls of Neuse Road
- Westbound left-turn queues exist along Dunn Road for vehicles wishing to turn south onto Falls of Neuse Road



- Minimal left and right-turns from unsignalized side streets are made onto northbound southbound Falls of Neuse Road due to lack of available vehicular gaps

### **Pedestrian**

- No sidewalks are present along the west side of Falls of Neuse Road from Durant Road to Raven Ridge Road
- No crosswalks crossing the northern, southern, or western intersection legs exist at the intersection of Durant Road and Falls of Neuse Road
- No pedestrian signals or buttons exist for the southern and western crosswalks exist at the intersection of Raven Ridge Road and Falls of Neuse Road
- No wheelchair ramps exist in the southwest intersection quadrant at the intersection of Raven Ridge Road and Falls of Neuse Road
- No crosswalk crossing the southern intersection leg exists at the intersection of Dunn Road and Falls of Neuse Road

### **Bicycle**

- Existing bicyclists utilize the existing multi-use path along the east side of the Falls of Neuse Road
- Existing 12-foot lanes along Falls of Neuse Road do not encourage or facilitate on-street riders



# Plan Recommendations

## Park-like Character

## Active Living

## Recreation Hub

The Falls North plan recommendations primarily fit within three main themes that align with the area's growing identity as a hub of outdoor activity and natural beauty. The themes and corresponding policies and actions build on the foundation of the earlier Falls of Neuse corridor plan and respond to issues and opportunities raised during this planning process.

The recommendations are divided into *policies* and *actions*. Policies generally refer to guidance aimed at the review of private development, such as when a property is rezoned. Key policies, which would be determinative during a rezoning review, are designated by an orange dot (●). Actions refer to city-initiated steps, such as constructing a sidewalk.

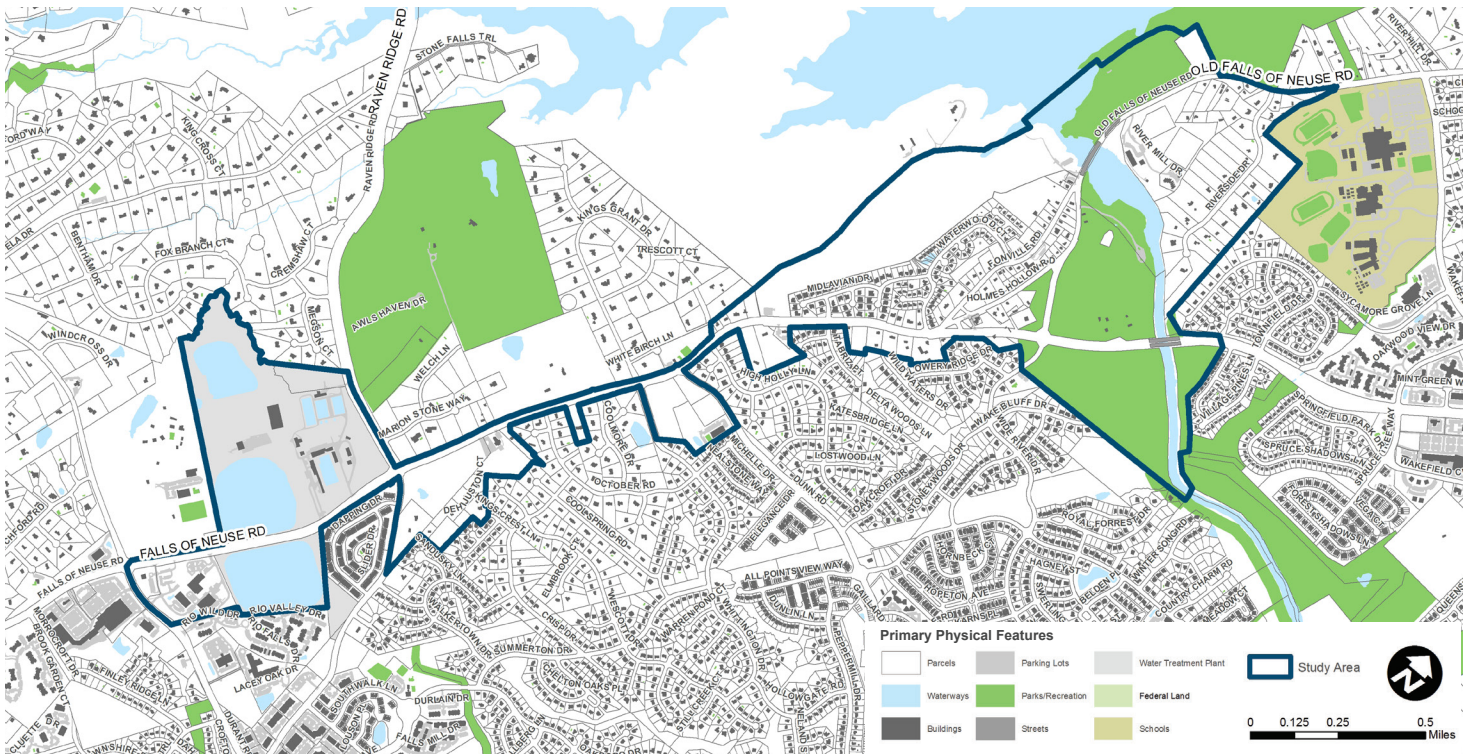
**Park-like Character** refers to recommendations for maintaining the wooded feel of the corridor and ensuring that the design of new development enhances the appearance of the area.

**Active Living** involves a suite of improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network, including enhanced greenway access and connectivity and improved pedestrian comfort and safety at intersections.

**Recreation Hub** is a collection of actions designed to add to the area's already extensive collection of public park facilities and to build on its identity as a hub of natural spaces.



# Final Study Area/Recommendations Map



The above map is a reference for the plan's recommended policies and actions. Some recommendations are intended to apply areawide and are identified as such. Others apply only to specific areas. When that is the case, additional maps are shown with the recommendation.

The map is identical to the original study area map shown on page 5, with the exception of several added parcels behind of the Falls of Neuse Road/Raven Ridge Road intersection. Those parcels were included because they share the same Future Land Use Map designation — Office and Residential Mixed Use — with parcels immediately at the intersection, and plan guidance should be applied to those parcels as well.







### Park-like Character

The Falls North area is defined by extensive roadside vegetation along primary corridors, natural features such as the Neuse River and Falls Lake, and significant amounts of park land. One of the primary goals of the plan is to maintain and enhance the park-like feel of the area.

This goal is accomplished through a series of policies that relate to tree preservation, particularly along the edges of main corridors such as Falls of Neuse Road, lighting, signage, drive-through facilities, and the historic Falls Community.



The Falls Community (above right) and the extensive vegetation along Falls of Neuse Road (below) are defining elements of the plan area.





# Forestation and Tree Conservation

The presence of significant amounts of greenery along major roads is a defining element of the Falls North area, and maintaining and enhancing that feature is an important goal of this plan.

Plan recommendations include policies related to both forestation and tree conservation. This section outlines the difference between the two and the relationship of plan policies to existing regulation.

## Existing Regulation

Raleigh's Uniform Development Ordinance addresses trees in two primary ways:

**Tree Conservation.** This refers to the preservation of *existing* trees on a development site. The UDO requires that a percentage of existing trees be preserved on all sites larger than 2 acres. Very low-density residential sites must maintain at least 15 percent of their total area as tree conservation area, while all other zones must designate at least 10 percent.

**Forestation.** Forestation requirements differ from tree conservation rules in that they may require additional planted area beyond existing trees. Forestation is required only in watershed protection overlay districts, such as the Urban Watershed Protection Overlay District, which

covers nearly all the plan area. Within this overlay, all lots, regardless of size, must preserve *or plant* trees on at least 40 percent of the site.

In this case, the plan recommends both tree conservation and forestation amount to 40 percent of a site (see policy FN 3 on the following page). While, with respect to forestation, this mirrors existing requirements, the policy could serve to discourage variance requests for a lower percentage.

## Policy Versus Regulation

This plan contains policy aimed at supplementing existing regulation within the plan area. Regulation refers to laws that must be followed; policy refers to guidelines that should be taken into account when decisions about regulations are made.

A common example of how policy would be applied is in the case of a rezoning request. The request would be considered in the light of plan policies. If the rezoning aligned with those policies by, for example, adding conditions specifying how tree conservation and forestation would be handled, it would be considered consistent with the plan, increasing its chances for approval.





**Policy FN 1: Falls North Character**

Protect the character of the corridor. Maintain the sense of place created by the extensive roadside vegetation, the Falls Lake Dam, and Falls Community.

**Policy FN 2: Falls North Frontage**

A Parkway frontage, which requires a 50' landscaped yard alongside the street, should be applied to properties being developed or redeveloped along Falls of Neuse Road and to properties being developed or redeveloped along Raven Ridge Road between Falls of Neuse Road and Moosecreek Drive. ●

**Policy FN 3: Falls North Forestation and Tree Conservation**

Clear cutting of sites is not consistent with the existing character of the area or the values expressed by residents. Wooded sites within the plan area should maintain a 40 percent tree conservation area, meaning existing trees must be preserved on at least 40 percent of the area. Where existing trees do not equal 40 percent of the site within the plan area, forestation should supplement the existing tree conservation area, for a total of 40 percent. ●

**Policy FN 4: Falls North Corridor Lighting**

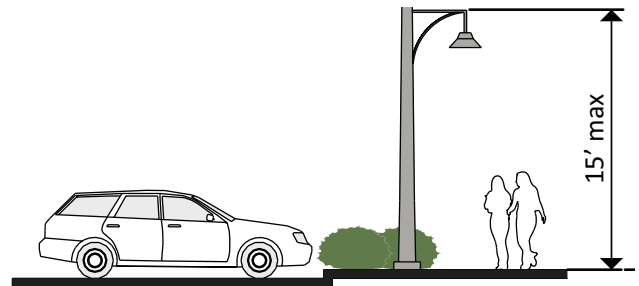
Light fixtures within the plan area should be limited to 15 feet in height and should be full cutoff. ●

**Policy FN 5: Falls North Area Conservation**

Protect environmentally significant features within the plan area, including the Falls Lake watershed, the Neuse River, slopes greater than 15 percent and the 100-year floodplain along the Neuse River. Environmentally significant areas in close proximity of the Neuse River should be protected and incorporated as an amenity with development plans. ●



Maintaining the substantial tree frontage along Falls of Neuse Road (above) and Raven Ridge Road is a significant policy goal. This would be implemented in the form of zoning conditions, which would be needed in order to gain consistency with the plan.



The plan recommends limiting the height of light fixtures to 15'. As with other policy recommendations, it would be implemented as properties are rezoned.



**Policy FN 6: Falls North Parking and Drive-Through Facilities**

Parking lots within the plan area should be located behind or beside buildings. Drive-through facilities should not be permitted. ●

**Policy FN 7: Falls North Corridor Signage**

Commercial signage within the plan area should consist of low-profile ground signs. Signage should not be internally-illuminated or digital. ●

**Policy FN 8: Falls Community**

The character and the design of new development or redevelopment in the historically-significant Falls Community should reflect in material, form, and character the unique character of existing homes in the neighborhood. ●



The plan calls for signage to take the form of low-profile ground signs and to avoid digital signs.



The Falls Community, developed as a mill village in the early 1900s, has a much different feel than the rest of the area. The plan calls for new development in the community to reflect the existing buildings in materials and form.



## Active Living

The Falls of Neuse corridor area, unlike many portions of Raleigh developed after World War II, has a relatively complete network of sidewalks. However, gaps exist. The following recommendations for improvements aimed at creating a more seamless pedestrian network.

### Action FN 1: Falls of Neuse/Raven Ridge Pedestrian Improvements

Make pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Raven Ridge and Falls of Neuse Road to make the intersection ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Improvements include:

- Install pedestrian signals and buttons for the southern and western intersection crosswalks.
- Construct wheelchair ramps in the southwest intersection quadrant.

### Action FN 2: Falls of Neuse Road Sidewalk Extension

Explore the possibility of a sidewalk, weighing potential demand and constraints to construction such as limited space between the road and reservoir, along the west side of Falls of Neuse Road from Durant Road to Raven Ridge Road. Ultimately, a sidewalk should be extended south of Durant Road to connect to the City's sidewalk system.

### Action FN 3: Falls of Neuse/Durant Pedestrian Improvements

The existing intersection poses difficulties for pedestrians crossing Durant Road. This action is aimed at facilitating pedestrian activity by creating a pedestrian refuge islane (see photo at top right). Specific actions include:

- Restripe the westbound Durant Road approach at Falls of Neuse Road to include dual left-turn lanes and a single shared through/right-turn lane.
- Widen the existing concrete island on Durant Road on the east side of the intersection to create a refuge for pedestrians crossing Durant Road.



The plan calls for a refuge island for pedestrians crossing Durant Road at Falls of Neuse Road. The island would be created by combining the through lane and right turn lane for vehicles approaching the intersection from the east on Durant Road.



The section of Falls of Neuse Road between Durant Road and Raven Ridge Road currently has a multi-use path on the east side. A sidewalk should be added to the west side of the road, and streetlights added where currently not present.



#### Action FN 4: Falls of Neuse Road Lighting

Add street lighting where missing segments exist.

#### Action FN 5: Fonville Road/Falls of Neuse Pedestrian Connection

Create a pedestrian connection from Fonville Road to Falls of Neuse Road at their former intersection. Abandon any excess right-of-way.

#### Action FN 6: Falls of Neuse Multi-Use Path Improvements

- Construct a pedestrian and bicycle connection from Lowery Farm Lane to the multi-use path alongside Falls of Neuse Road.
- Add crosswalk striping for the existing multi-use path at the Galligan Family Dentistry Driveway

#### Action FN 7: Wayfinding

Provide bicycle wayfinding along Lowery Farm Lane, Wide River Drive, and Wake Bluff Drive to tie into City's existing bike network. All bicycle improvements will be consistent with the City's BikeRaleigh plan.

#### Action FN 8: Old Falls of Neuse Pedestrian Improvements

Add sidewalks where missing along Old Falls of Neuse Road between Falls of Neuse Road and Wakefield Pines Drive.



A bicycle and pedestrian connection should be made between Lowery Farm Lane (the cul-de-sac in the above photo) and the multi-use path along Falls of Neuse Road.



Bicycle wayfinding signs providing directions to the Falls of Neuse Road multi-use path and Neuse River Greenway should be placed along key streets east of Falls of Neuse Road.



## Recreation Hub

### Policy FN 9: Falls Retail Uses

Uses should be limited to retail and eating establishments. Existing buildings should be preserved, and any new buildings should be no taller than two stories and 35 feet. Any new building or buildings should total no more than 4,000 square feet, with new impervious surfaces minimized. Hours of operation should generally follow those of the nearby recreational facilities. ●

### Policy FN 10: Falls Retail Design

Any future restaurant or retail uses in the Falls community should be on a smaller scale appropriate to the neighborhood and users of nearby recreational amenities. Buildings should be in the style and character of the existing homes in the area and maintain the sense of place created from the old mill town and current and

future outdoor recreation facilities. ●

### Action FN 9: Falls Retail

The Future Land Use Map's existing Neighborhood Mixed Use node at the Falls Community should be slightly expanded in order to accommodate a new restaurant or recreation-serving retail use while retaining the existing character of the area.



A small expansion (shown in green below) of the existing commercial area (shown in red) at the Falls Community would allow for recreation-supportive restaurant or retail uses.



Any new or renovated buildings in the Falls Community retail area should reflect the scale, form, and materials of existing buildings. Existing buildings should be reused.



**Action FN 10: Leonard Tract Expansion:** The city-owned property near the southwest corner of Falls of Neuse Road and Wide River Drive designated as Low Density Residential on the Future Land Use Map should be reclassified as Public Parks and Open Space and should be considered as part of the overall Leonard Tract as part of planning for future park development.

**Action FN 11: Future Leonard Tract Park Development**

Develop, with public input, a plan for the creation of a city park on the Leonard Tract, either by itself or in conjunction with other city parklands and properties along the Neuse River.

**Action FN 12: Falls North Identity**

Promote and strengthen the area's identity as a hub for recreational activity and natural scenery for the region. All relevant City maps and documents should refer to the area as Falls North.

**Action FN 13: Neuse River Greenway Access**

Provide additional vehicle parking at or near entrances to the Neuse River Greenway.



The area outlined in green above illustrates the recommended Leonard Tract expansion and area to be reclassified as Public Parks and Open Space.



Plan recommendations aim to increase access to the Neuse River Greenway, both in the form of additional bicycle and pedestrian connections and expanded vehicular parking at trail access points.



## Site-Specific Recommendations

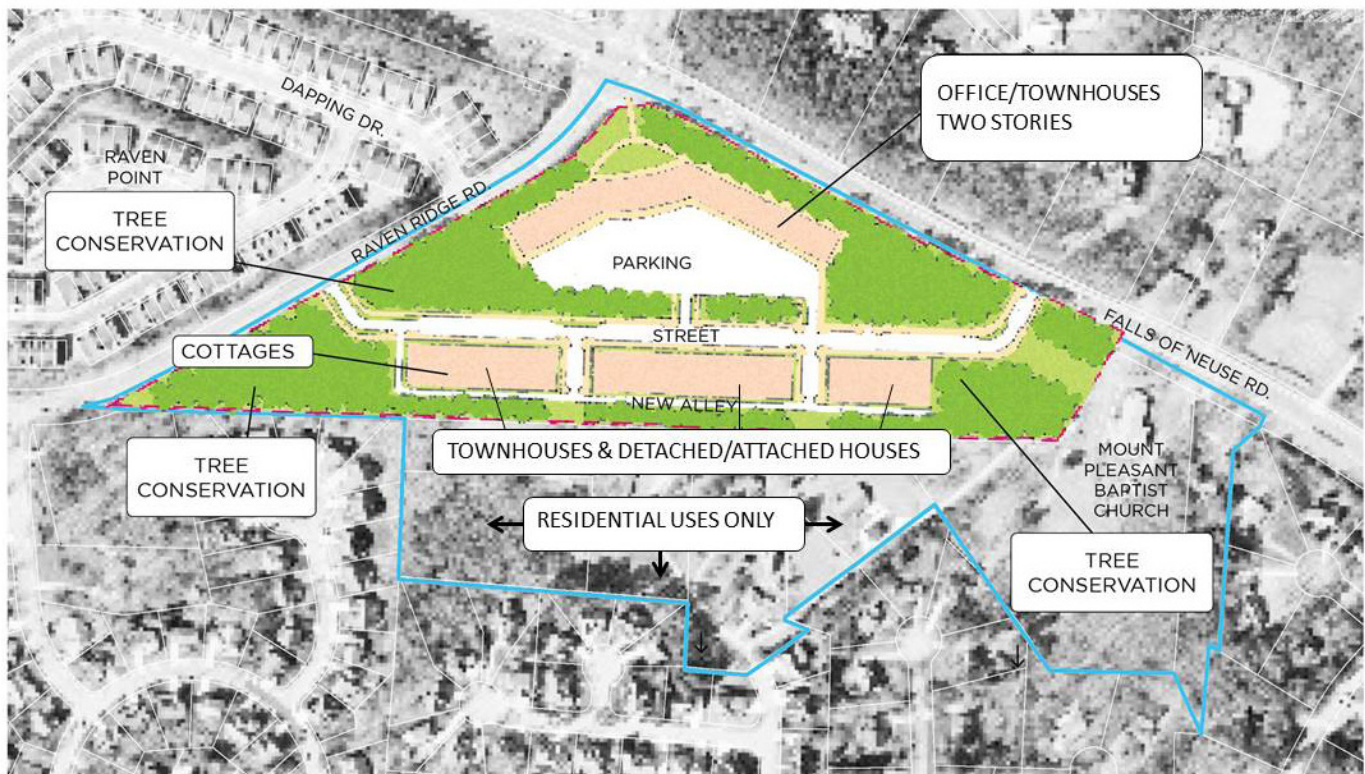
### Policy FN 11: Falls of Neuse/Raven Ridge Area

Uses within this area, shown as Office and Residential Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map, should be limited to only office (including medical office) and/or residential and should exclude ancillary retail.

The Apartment and Mixed Use building types should not be permitted. Height should be limited to two stories and 35'. Office uses should be limited to the area within 150' of Falls of Neuse Road or Raven Ridge Road.



Examples of building types and uses consistent with this plan policy are shown to the left.

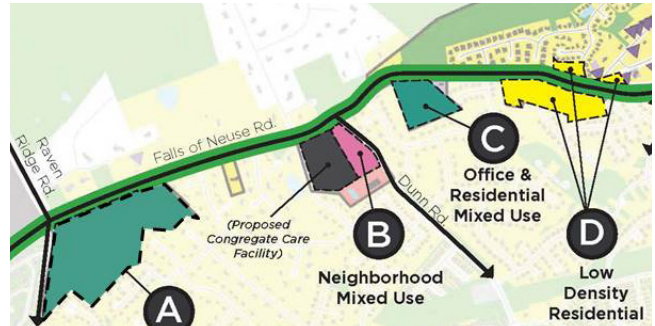


The above concept illustrates the recommended policy for any future rezoning requests in the Falls of Neuse/Raven Ridge area (outlined in blue).



### Policy FN 12: Dunn Road Area

In the event of a future rezoning, the Dunn Road/Falls of Neuse Neighborhood Mixed Use Area should be developed in context with the surrounding neighborhood and with a walkable development pattern. The scale and design of buildings should reflect their surroundings. Any commercial development should include a mix of office and retail uses.



The Dunn Road area refers to the commercially-zoned area at the southeast corner of the intersection of Dunn Road and Falls of Neuse Road. It is shown as area B in the above map.



Examples of contextual development are shown in the images to the left.



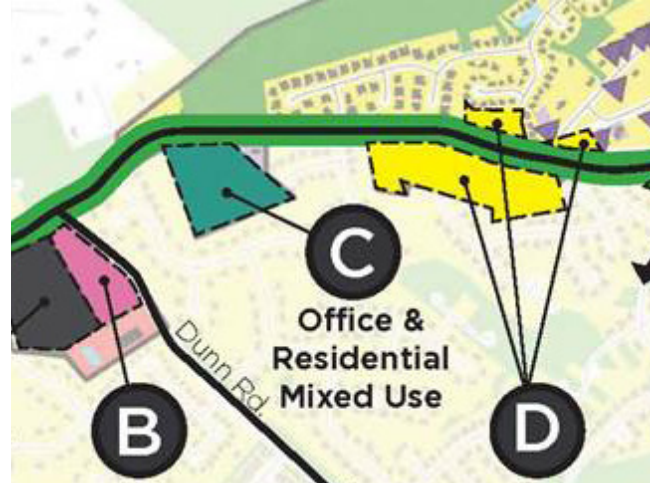


### Policy FN 13: Falls of Neuse Office Uses

The area along the east side of Falls of Neuse road between High Holly Lane and Tabriz Court should maintain its current designation as Office and Residential Mixed Use. Office buildings should be no more than two stories tall and should include architectural features, such as a gable roof, that blend with nearby residential structures. Facades should include materials such as wood, stone, brick, and similar.



Examples of office buildings fitting in a residential context are shown above.



The area shown above as area C should retain its current Future Land Use Map designation as Office and Residential Mixed Use.

### Action FN 14: Falls of Neuse Residential Uses

The area along Falls of Neuse Road between Tabriz Point and Lowery Farm Lane should be reclassified on the Future Land Use Map to Low Density Residential from Office and Residential Mixed Use.



The above image shows the area to be reclassified as Low Density Residential.



## **Other Recommendations**

### **Policy FN 14: Falls North Frontage Lots**

Small frontage lots on Falls of Neuse Road should be recombined for development where possible rather than redeveloped individually.

### **Action FN 15: Dehijuston/Raven Ridge Road Connection**

A new public street should connect Dehijuston Court with Raven Ridge Road.



# Action Matrix

Action	Description	Responsibility	Time Frame	Estimated Cost
Falls of Neuse/Raven Ridge Pedestrian Improvements	Pedestrian actuation heads for south/west crosswalks; wheelchair ramp in southwest quadrant	NCDOT, Raleigh DOT	Near (0-2 years)	Less than \$20,000
Falls of Neuse Sidewalk Extension	Add a sidewalk and street lighting on west side of road from Durant to Raven Ridge	NCDOT, RDOT	Medium (2-5 years)	\$250,000 for sidewalks (assumes \$70/linear foot for sidewalks); \$200,000 for lighting (assumes \$8,000/light)
Falls of Neuse/Durant Pedestrian Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restripe westbound Durant Road approach to create a shared through/right turn lane</li> <li>- Widen existing concrete island to provide a pedestrian refuge</li> </ul>	NCDOT, RDOT	Medium (2-5 years)	Less than \$10,000
Fonville Road/Falls of Neuse Pedestrian Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a pedestrian connection from Fonville Road to Falls of Neuse Road at their former intersection</li> <li>- Abandon excess right-of-way</li> </ul>	RDOT	Medium (2-5 years)	Less than \$10,000
Falls of Neuse Multi-Use Path Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construct a pedestrian and bicycle connection from Lowery Farm Lane to the Falls of Neuse multi-use path</li> <li>- Add crosswalk striping for the Falls of Neuse multi-use path where missing segments exist</li> </ul>	NCDOT; RDOT	Near (0-2 years)	\$10,000
Bicycle Wayfinding	Provide bicycle wayfinding signs along Lowery Farm Lane, Wide River Drive, and Wake Bluff Drive to tie into the existing bike network	Raleigh DOT	Near (0-2 years)	Less than \$500
Old Falls of Neuse Pedestrian Improvements	Add sidewalks where missing along Old Falls of Neuse Road between Falls of Neuse Road and Wakefield Pines Drive	NCDOT, RDOT	Medium (2-5 years)	\$370,000 for one side of road (assumes \$70/linear foot for sidewalks)



# Action Matrix

Action	Description	Responsibility	Time Frame	Estimated Cost
Leonard Tract Park Development	Develop a plan for the creation of a city park on the Leonard Tract, either by itself or in conjunction with other park properties along the Neuse River	Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department	Medium (2-5 years)	Depends on scope of plan
Falls North Identity	Promote and strengthen the area's identity as a hub for recreational activity and natural scenery. All relevant city maps and documents should refer to the area as Falls North	Raleigh Department of City Planning; All City departments	Near (0-2 years)	None/staff time
Neuse River Trail Access	Provide additional vehicle parking at or near the entrance to the Neuse River Greenway	Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department	Near (0-2 years)	\$100,000
Dehijuston/Raven Ridge Road Connection	Connect Dehijuston Court and Raven Ridge Road with a new public street	Raleigh DOT; property owner	Depends on development of property	\$750,000-\$1,500,000







